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ABSTRACT

The premise of this paper is that, although career choice implies options, issues of gender, race, and class may constrain the occupational choices an individual makes. Dominant career development theories are being reexamined for their appropriateness to diverse groups. This paper reviews the following theories: Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, and Herma's (1951); Holland's Career Typology (1985); Super's Theory of Vocational Choice (1996); Social Cognitive Career Theory; and recent work by Gottfredson (1996) and Bandura (1986). The review shows how vocational choice is influenced by one's self-concept and sextyping of occupations, as well as by environmental factors. Specific issues and barriers are presented: for women, the effect of socialization on self-efficacy; for African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Native Americans, the influence of internal and external attitudes and factors, and for low-income groups, the effects of economic circumstances and social attitudes. Career counseling strategies that address issues of gender, race, and class are derived from career development theory. The importance of the role of the classroom teacher, who may be even more influential than the guidance counselor, is stressed. Contains 77 references. (SK)

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# Career Development:

## *Issues of Gender, Race, and Class*

*Information Series No. 371*

Wanda L.
Stitt-Gohdes

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# Career Development:

## *Issues of Gender, Race, and Class*

***Information Series No. 371***

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# Foreword

The Educational Resources Information Center Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education (ERIC/ACVE) is 1 of 16 clearinghouses in a national information system that is funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education. This paper was developed to fulfill one of the functions of the clearinghouse—interpreting the literature in the ERIC database. This paper should be of interest to vocational education teachers and guidance counselors.

ERIC/ACVE would like to thank Wanda L. Stitt-Gohdes for her work in preparing this paper. Dr. Stitt-Gohdes is Associate Professor in the Department of Occupational Studies, University of Georgia. She has also served on the business education faculty of California State University and New York University. In 1996 she was named Collegiate Educator of the Year by the Southern Business Education Association and Collegiate Teacher of the Year by the Georgia Business Education Association. She has published articles on race, class, and gender issues in the ***Journal of Counseling Education*** and ***Journal for Vocational Special Needs Education.***

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Darrell L. Parks
Executive Director
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# Executive Summary

Career choice implies that an individual has options available. However, issues of gender, race, and class may constrain the occupational choices an individual makes. Dominant career development theories are being reexamined for their appropriateness to diverse groups. This paper reviews such theories as Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, and Herma's; Holland's Career Typology; Super's Theory of Vocational Choice; Social Cognitive Career Theory; and recent work by Gottfredson and Bandura. The review shows how vocational choice is influenced by one's self-concept and sextyping of occupations, as well as by environmental factors.

Specific issues and barriers are presented: for women, the effect of socialization on self-efficacy; for African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Native Americans, the influence of internal and external attitudes and factors, and for low-income groups, the effects of economic circumstances and social attitudes. Career counseling strategies that address issues of gender, race, and class are derived from career development theory. The importance of the role of the classroom teacher, who may be even more influential than the guidance counselor, is stressed.

Information on career development issues of gender, race, and class may be found in the ERIC system using the following descriptors: *Career Choice, *Career Development, Counseling Techniques, *Females, Low Income, *Minority Groups, *Occupational Aspiration, Self Efficacy, *Social Class, Social Cognition, Teacher Role, Theories. Asterisks indicated descriptors that are particularly relevant.

# Introduction

*No step in life, unless it may be the choice of a husband or wife, is more important than the choice of a vocation* (Parsons 1909, p. 3).

The mere notion of career development implies that initially a career *choice* has been made. The term *choice* implies that a number of options are available from which one might choose. Although this may well be the case for the majority population, especially white males, a very different set of choices may emerge when the issues of gender, race, and class are introduced. And as the demographics of communities continue to change, the issues of gender, race, and class with regard to career development become increasingly critical not only for the academic and economic success of every student, but also for the continuing economic growth of the nation.

The connection between gender, race, and class and career choice has some history in the literature. Lawrence and Brown (1976) investigated the relationship between self-concept, intelligence, socioeconomic status, race, and sex to career maturity. Super's theory of career maturity provided the foundation for their study, which found that "self-concept appears to have a different impact on career maturity for twelfth graders depending upon the race and sex of the subjects" (p. 49). Lawrence and Brown recommended that the relationship between the ability to predict career maturity and race and sex be investigated further. Although Lawrence and Brown's study did not affirm the effect of socioeconomic status on prediction of career maturity, they suggested that closer attention be paid to those individuals "who may serve as role models and/or information providers" (p. 50). This issue of the influence of role models frequently surfaces in career development literature.

Grant and Sleeter (1988) looked at the effect of school culture in particular. These authors sought "to understand why students of color, lower-class white students, and female students, both white and of color, tend not to succeed in school and out, and tend to assume subordinate roles in society in spite of the fact that school is supposed to serve as an equalizer" (p. 19). Every day the success—or lack thereof—which students meet is a result of the worlds in which they live and learn. Only by close inspection of these two worlds is one able to determine more clearly their impact on

student self-efficacy, the extent to which one assesses his or her abilities relative to achieving a desired end, and, thus, ultimately, career choice. Grant and Sleeter followed 24 students as they moved through junior high school, senior high school, and graduation. Data were collected via interviews, observations, and questionnaires over a 7-year period. Grant and Sleeter found that over time many of the students in this study abandoned their dreams. Some examples are illustrative. In junior high 13 students indicated they would definitely go to college. By the time they got to high school, only 3 of the 13 still had definite plans to attend college. Many students' career choices were influenced by what their parents wanted them to do. The economy affected their career choices, too; they recognized their dreams would be countered by the reality of job availability. Curiously, most of these students from a multiracial high school and community were accepting of this diversity. Their self-perceptions regarding gender and potential careers were more stereotypic as they neared graduation. The article speaks directly to the need for intervention programs for career development as related to gender, race, and class as it discusses the career choice paths these students take. Their career choice journey begins with an endless array of possibilities, all of which appear attainable. As these students mature and become more knowledgeable of the world around them, their choices narrow and become more reflective of their parents' lives. They acquiesce, if you will, to the existing social and cultural relationships (ibid.).

Clearly, the environment in which children live and learn significantly influences *all* their choices. The future face of the work force at the start of the 21st century is yet another reason for a critical evaluation of career development and issues of gender, race, and class. Hoyt (1989) provides the following data:

- Five of every six new labor market entrants between 1986 and 2000 will be women, minority persons, or immigrants.
- Women and minority persons continue to experience discrimination in terms of gaining full access to education and career preparation programs.
- Minority youth tend to be concentrated in large urban school districts whose facilities and educational offerings are, on the average, inferior to those in affluent suburban areas. In 23 of the 25 largest cities in America, minority students now comprise a majority of the school population. (p. 209)

Apolloni, Feichtner, and West (1991) add this to the shocking description of those who hope to enter the work force of the 21st

century: "Thirty percent of students in grades K-12 are educationally disadvantaged due to poverty, cultural obstacles, or linguistic barriers; and 30 percent of students entering high school will leave prior to graduation" (p. 6). The impact of those who drop out is felt not only by the individuals themselves but also by the work force and society in terms of increased demand on the social support and welfare system as well as increased violence by the disenfranchised (Stitt-Gohdes 1996). This is further affected by the fact that the work force will be increasingly comprised of women and people of color.

So, for far too many students, the following portrays the current approach to career development:

Alice: "Would you please tell me which way I ought to go from here?"
Cheshire Cat: "Well, that depends a good deal on where you want to go."
Alice: "I don't much care where."
Cheshire Cat: "Then it doesn't matter which way you go."

Lewis Carroll
*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 1865

Too often this attitude is driven by *who* the student is vis-a-vis gender, race, and class, rather than *what* the student is seeking. Clearly, if the needs of students and, ultimately, of the nation's economy, are to be met effectively, investigation of the intersection of gender, race, and class and career development is needed.

As Hoyt (1989) reminded us, equitable opportunities in the workplace are inextricably tied to equitable opportunities in the classroom. Career *choice* is a critical aspect of equity of educational opportunity. Thus, the following are the purposes of this monograph: (1) to provide an historical overview of career development; (2) to review dominant theories of career development; (3) to investigate gender, race, and class as potential barriers to equitable career development; and (4) to provide some strategies for developing environments where career development begins with genuine career choice.

# Historical Overview of Career Development

The discussion of dominant career development theories is critical because they drive career development strategies selected by school counselors. Indeed, current literature suggests that, although career development theories have been around for many years, "the manner in which they have been applied in the educational environment has not changed significantly in the last 20 years. . . . In addition, there is an increased awareness of the impact of gender, race, and class on the career decision-making process" (Murry and Stitt-Gohdes 1995, p. 62).

The career development movement in the United States did not, and appropriately so, develop independently of other factors critical to the nation's growth and transformation. Stephens (1970) reminded us that one goal of vocational guidance was social reform. The vocational guidance movement and, thus, career development, affects the entire person; and it has been affected by political, economic, and social factors, to name a few. Its long-term impact on the person and society is inestimable (Zunker 1994). This inclusiveness is somewhat reflected in a definition provided by Tiedeman and O'Hara (1963): "Career development refers to those aspects of the continuous unbroken flow of a person's experience that are of relevance to (personal) fashioning of an identity at work" (p. 2).

This "fashioning of an identity at work" may well be translated more simply and appropriately into just "fashioning of an identity" because in the culture of America, we are what we do. In casual and not-so-casual conversation, we are far more likely to be asked, "What do you do?" rather than "Who are you?" Not only does what we do determine our identity, it also determines our status in life. And the choices from which we may choose what we do are significantly influenced by who we are vis-a-vis gender, race, and class. Perhaps the beginning of the importance of what one does began in the United States with the Industrial Revolution.

The move in the United States from an agrarian- to an industrial-based economy brought about significant changes not only in the focus of the work force but also in the preparation of the work force. Skill requirements for farm work were quite different from those required for factory work. Thus questions began to arise regarding exactly how an individual went about choosing a career that best fit him, and, yes, him is the appropriate pronoun for that period in history. That is not to say that women and minorities were not employed in factories. They were, indeed; however, they were held in the same regard as any other expendable resource. Once the labor supply of men was replenished, women and minorities were let go. Women were even able to work in union shops, but were never able to remain in those jobs which would ultimately result in union membership and job security.

About this same time, Frank Parsons, educated as an engineer but a devotee of social reform issues, developed a conceptual framework that one might use in choosing a possible career. The following are the three points in his framework (Parsons 1909, p. 5):

- First, a clear understanding of yourself, your aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, limitations, and their causes;
- Second, a knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensations, opportunities, and prospects in different lines of work;
- Third, true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts.

The value of Parsons' work is that in many ways these three steps have had an impact on much of the career development work that followed.

Shortly after the turn of the century, significant work was begun in mental measurement by such people as James M. Cattell, Alfred Binet, and Arthur S. Otis. The start of World War I signaled a real need for evaluative processes to help best place young recruits into the armed services. ***The Strong Vocational Interest Blank***, first published in 1927, "provided career counselors with a most important tool for linking assessment results with certain occupations" (Zunker 1994, p. 8).

Of course, World War II literally changed the face of the work force overnight when thousands of women were hired into roles that previously had been filled only by men. Although many of

these women were either forced or chose to return to more traditional roles after the war, their contributions to the work force during the war opened the door to genuine career choice for the next generation of women.

The 1950s saw the publication of a number of theories of career development, some of which are landmarks yet today. These early theorists include Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, and Herma; Holland; and Super. It is critical to the present discussion to note that the foundation for much of these earlier theories was the experiences of middle-class, white males. Although clearly the work of these individuals is invaluable in current career development, it is equally important to understand that a blanket acceptance of these theories for women and minorities may not be the best practice. The 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s saw the Civil Rights Amendment pass, the women's movement develop and flourish, and the beginning of the influx of immigrants into the United States and, thus, into the work force. These events have had a dramatic impact on the work force. Thus, it was critical that career development theory be reexamined for its appropriateness for those other than white, middle-class males. This reexamination brought about several new theorists, not the least of whom are Gottfredson and Bandura.

This historical overview lays the foundation for further examination of dominant theories of career development as well as theories specifically appropriate for women and minorities.

# Theories of Career Development

In the field of career development, several theories are consistently cited. Those theories discussed here are the Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, and Herma Theory, Holland's Career Typology, and Super's Self-Concept Theory. In addition, contemporary theorists of career development (e.g., Gottfredson) relevant to women and minorities are discussed.

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### *Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, and Herma*

The theory developed by Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, and Herma (1951) began by recognizing that vocational choice is influenced by four factors: the reality factor, the influence of the educational process, the emotional factor, and individual values. These theorists concluded that the path to career choice is a developmental one, starting in the preteen years and ending in young adulthood. The three stages Ginzberg et al. developed are fantasy, tentative, and realistic. The fantasy stage occurs in childhood and focuses on play. The term fantasy is extremely appropriate here because there is no connection—and appropriately so—with reality. During this stage, the child is free to imagine pursuing any occupation, a no-holds-barred approach to career choice! What can and does become evident during this time are the child's preferred activities. This may provide a glimpse of future career choices.

The tentative stage begins in the preteen years and continues through high school. This stage is further subdivided: interest, capacity, value, and transition. The further definition of likes and dislikes takes place in the interest stage when the youth also begins to recognize that he or she may have a greater affinity for some things over others. At the same time, young people begin to recognize the greater value of some activities over others. The cumulative effect of these stages manifests itself in the transition stage when the student conspicuously begins the career choice process and begins to recognize the consequences and responsibilities of choice.

The realistic stage, spanning from mid-adolescence through young adulthood, also is subdivided into three stages: exploration, crystallization, and specification. In the exploration stage the individual begins to restrict choices with the recognition of likes and dislikes and skills and abilities. This process helps one move to crystallization where a vocational choice is made. This drives the last stage, specification, where the individual pursues the educational experience required to reach his or her career goal (Osipow and Fitzgerald 1996; Zunker 1994).

Will all young people fit nicely into these stages? No. Why not? Often it is because of issues of gender, race, and class. Doors open to majority, middle-class, male students are often closed to minority, low-income, female students. This, however, is precisely why early intervention and meaningful career development opportunities are even more critically important for minorities, women, and low-income persons.

A discussion of this theory must include a description of the students whom Ginzberg's group empirically investigated. "Their sample was comprised of males from upper-middle-class, urban, Protestant or Catholic families of Anglo-Saxon origin, whose educational level ranged from sixth grade to graduate school" (Zunker 1994, p. 27). "Furthermore, the boys were generally emotionally stable, considerably above average intellectually, and ostensibly college bound" (Osipow and Fitzgerald 1996, p. 30). Because of the composition of the sample, the generalizability is limited to a like population.

## *Holland's Career Typology*

The typology developed by John Holland is grounded in what he calls *modal personal orientation* and is in concert with Parsons' approach to career development. Both these theorists saw the connection between one's experiences and likes and dislikes and what one chooses as his or her life's work. Zunker (1994) reports this regarding Holland's typology: "A comparison of self with the perception of an occupation and subsequent acceptance or rejection is a major determinant in career choice. *Modal personal orientation* is a developmental process established through heredity and the individual's life history of reacting to environmental demands" (p. 45). More simply put, "individuals are attracted to a particular role demand of an occupational environment that meets their personal needs and provides them with satisfaction" (p. 45).

Holland's (1985) theory rests on four assumptions:

1. In our culture, most persons can be categorized as one of six types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, or Conventional (p. 2).
2. There are six modal environments: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional (p. 3).
3. People search for environments that will let them exercise their skills and abilities, express their attitudes and values, and take on agreeable problems and roles (p. 4).
4. Behavior is determined by an interaction between personality and environment (p. 4).

Each of the six types identified in the first assumption has concomitant personal styles and thus related occupational environments to which an individual might gravitate based on his or her modal personal style. From these six types a hexagonal model was developed that better illustrates the relationship between personality types and "occupational environment coefficients of correlation" (Zunker 1994, p. 47).

Holland's theory has been used and tested extensively. Much of this research supports his typology. One criticism may be regarding possible gender bias. Zunker (1994) reports that the "*Self-Directed Search (SDS)* limits the career considerations for women and that most females tend to score in three personality types (artistic, social, and conventional). In defense of the *SDS*, Holland suggested that in our sexist society, females will display a greater interest in female-dominated occupations" (p. 49).

## *Super's Theory of Vocational Choice*

Donald Super expertly linked developmental psychology and career behavior to generate a theory of career development. The inclusion of developmental psychology is a reflection of the influence of Buehler's work regarding stages of development throughout one's life. Super has further refined his career development theory to a life-span, life-space approach and has developed a Life-Career Rainbow to display graphically the relationship between time and space as they relate to an individual's movement through life/career development. Life space, reflecting personal and situational determinants, supplies the contextual dimension. The life span perspective includes five life and career development stages. Growth is the first stage, starting at birth and ending around age 14.

Following this is an exploratory stage, occurring between ages 15 and 24. The establishment stage occurs sometime between 15 and 44 years of age. The maintenance stage comes next and covers the next 20 years, ending at about age 65. Disengagement, age 65+, focuses on retirement planning and living (Super, Savickas, and Super 1996). *What* we are doing in our lives is dependent not only upon *where* we are in our lives but also on a number of other factors such as socioeconomic status of parents, intellect, education, personality, career maturity, as well as life experiences (ibid.)

Super's marriage of this schema with career development to form his career development theory is "based on the assumption that vocational tasks reflect larger life tasks" (Osipow and Fitzgerald 1996, p. 110). Indeed it would be incongruent to choose a vocation that caused dissonance with all else in one's life. It is also logical to conclude that one's vocational choice is a reflection of where one is in life's journey.

In fact Super's term, vocational psychology, represents the marriage of the psychology of occupations, which assumes that career choice is made once in a lifetime, with the psychology of careers, which "rests on the assumption that career development conforms to the general principles of human development, which are fundamentally evolutionary in nature" (Osipow and Fitzgerald 1996, p. 111).

Five vocational developmental tasks have emanated from these five stages of vocational development: (1) the *crystallization* stage, ages 14-18, (2) *specification* stage, ages 18-21, (3) *implementation* stage, ages 21-24, (4) the *stabilization* stage, ages 24-35, and (5) *consolidation*, the final stage at age 35+. These developmental tasks are generally defined by unexceptional age ranges and concomitant characteristics.

The structure and perhaps confinement seemingly apparent in these tasks belies Super's understanding and awareness of the fluidity of age and transitions. Thus, in early 1990 Super modified these developmental tasks, recognizing that transition involves self-analysis, introspection, and recycling (Super, Savickas, and Super 1996). In fact, today one is far more likely to cycle and recycle through several careers. This may be driven in part by society's acceptance of the fact that it is not reasonable to assume that a decision made when one is 21 years old was either appropriate then or continues to be appropriate. In addition, other life changes and transitions may permit recycling today when they may not have 50 years ago.

In addition, one's self-concept is intimately connected with Super's career development theory. "Super saw self-concept theory as divided into two components: (1) personal or psychological, which focuses on how individuals choose and adapt to their choices; and (2) social, which focuses on the personal assessment individuals make of their socioeconomic situations and current social structure in which they work and live. The relationship of self-concept to career development is one of the major contributions of Super's theory" (Zunker 1994, p. 34).

Super understands that career development is not a unidimensional, unidirectional, intellectually driven process alone. Again, his blending of psychology of careers with the psychology of occupations provides a strong foundation for one of the most widely respected career development theories.

**"Women, people of color, and the poor have been methodically omitted from career development research."**

Although these theorists have provided an excellent foundation for career development, they also reflect the dominant makeup of the professional work force of 20 or 30 years ago: white, middle-class males. Indeed, women, people of color, and the poor have been methodically omitted from career development research. As Luzzo (1992) stated, "the marked increase of African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Filipinos, coupled with the expectation that the percentage of minorities in the workforce will increase to 15.5% by the year 2000 supports numerous recommendations for researching the career development of ethnic minorities and developing appropriate intervention strategies" (p. 161). It also warrants an investigation of contemporary career development theories that provide some insight into this process for women, people of color, and the poor.

## *Contemporary Theories of Career Development for Women and Minorities*

For Linda Gottfredson, a sociologist by education, a concern of career choice and—thus, vocational psychology—is the extent to which one's individuality and freedom may be maintained in career development and occupational pursuit. Thus, her theory of circumscription and compromise "was an attempt . . . to explain how youngsters' career aspirations come to reflect the social inequalities among their elders" (Gottfredson 1996, p. 181). Her work is reflective of both Holland and Super in that it acknowledges that career choice is a developmental process and that the success or failure of career choice is, in large part, determined by how well it

"fits" with one's personality and self-concept. This theory diverges from other vocational development and psychology theories in four ways. First, the theory focuses on the more overt aspects of self, gender, social class, and intelligence, as opposed to the covert elements of values or personality that often serve as the foundation or focus of other theories. Next, the theory examines the connection between cognitive development and its impact on the career development of preschool youth. Third, this theory views vocational choice as an act of volition, beginning early in childhood where one intentionally evaluates and eliminates options, thus narrowing plausible choices. Finally, the theory attempts to address how individuals compromise their goals when reality comes into play as they work to achieve their aspirations. Perhaps one of the most critical contributions of Gottfredson's theory is its explanation of "a social phenomenon that disturbs many people: children tend to recreate the social order of their elders, including gender and social class differences in employment, even before they themselves enter the labor market" (p. 182).

"

**A major element of Gottfredson's theory is the marriage of one's self-concept with one's image of occupations.**

"

Perhaps simply stated, a major element of Gottfredson's theory is the marriage of one's self-concept with one's image of occupations. One's image of an occupation is determined by the extent to which it is compatible with his or her own self-concept or image. Embedded in this theory is the assumption that those occupations most in conflict with self-concept will be rejected first. One must also determine how accessible the chosen occupation really is. Each individual then, usually unconsciously, develops a *social space*, that area in which acceptable choices lie—a territory if you will. Therefore, "circumscription is the process by which youngsters narrow that territory. It is the progressive elimination of unacceptable alternatives to create a social space (zone of acceptable alternatives). Compromise is the process by which youngsters begin to relinquish their most preferred alternatives for less compatible but more accessible ones" (p. 187).

Gottfredson developed four stages of circumscription. Stage one is Orientation to Size and Power, ages 3-5. Here children recognize that work is something adults do and stop considering impossible occupations (e.g., a tree, a puppy). Stage two is Orientation to Sex Roles, ages 6-8. A primary concern here is the selection of an occupation that is aligned with one's gender. Children begin to eliminate careers because they are the wrong "sextype." Stage three is Orientation to Social Valuation, ages 9-13. At this point students are very clear about social evaluation of occupations and begin to understand the connection between income, education, and occupation. This is also a time when children recognize the

connection between social class background, ability, and career aspirations. They are very aware of "their place in the social order and narrow their vocational options accordingly" (p. 194). Stage four is Orientation to the Internal, Unique Self, ages 14 and above. The winnowing away of unacceptable options in the previous stages gives way here to identifying a preferred and accessible career.

## *Social Cognitive Career Theory*

The Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) has grown out of Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory and is an effort to complement current theories of career development (Brown and Brooks 1996). This theory, with its roots in constructivism, stresses a dynamic process that helps one to shape and choose occupational and career choice. "SCCT adopts Bandura's (1986) triadic reciprocal model of causality. This model holds that personal attributes, external environmental factors, and overt behavior each operate in interactive sets of variables that mutually influence one another" (Lent and Brown 1996, p. 312). SCCT focuses on three elaborately connected variables that influence one's career choice: self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals.

Bandura (1986) defines self-efficacy beliefs as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (p. 391); in other words, "Do I have what it takes to do this?" Lent and Brown (1996) hold that these beliefs are developed and revised through four major sources: "(a) personal performance accomplishments, (b) vicarious learning, (c) social persuasion, and (d) physiological states and reactions" (p. 312). Clearly, personal performance has the greatest impact on self-efficacy, perhaps bearing out the adage "Success breeds success!"

Outcome expectations are what one believes will be the effects of certain behavior(s). This behavior is influenced by an individual's own sense of ability and/or capability as well as simply what he or she *thinks* will be the resulting action. These expectations emanate from both direct and vicarious educational opportunities.

Personal goals mean just that: conscientious decisions to pursue a particular activity to reach a particular outcome. Social cognitivists suggest that these goals are influenced by one's self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Establishing personal goals helps, even

requires, an individual to plan and organize his or her behavior so as to reach the goal(s). If I have high self-efficacy, my goals will be very different than if I have low self-efficacy. These goals are also influenced by outcome expectations that result from all life experience.

How do these three aspects work together in the career development process? As an individual develops an expertise/ability for a particular endeavor and meets with success (e.g., feels productive and experiences positive consequences), one is likely to develop goals that involve continuing involvement in that activity/endeavor. This is an evolutionary process beginning in early childhood and continuing into early adulthood when one narrows the scope to that endeavor or related group of endeavors that work together to form a career goal/choice.

What is critical to the success of this process is the extent to which people view this endeavor/activity as both one at which they are successful and one that offers compensation they value. It is at this point in the developmental process that the impact of gender, race, and class becomes increasingly significant. Indeed, if the opportunities to which one is exposed are narrow or if individuals feel they have little probability of success in that endeavor, the result is a inaccurate "occupational self-efficacy or outcome expectations" (Lent and Brown 1996, p. 314).

Lent and Brown (1996) hypothesize that when one perceives few or no barriers to occupational choice, the likelihood for career interest to "blossom" is much greater. The SCCT authors are also acutely aware of the impact of contextual factors or conditions on career choice. These contextual factors or conditions may include discriminatory hiring practices as well as familial pressure in career choice.

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The inherent value of SCCT and its difference from the majority of existing career development theories is its dynamic nature. Most existing theories view the person and his or her traits as constant or stable both throughout time and in diverse contexts. "By contrast, social cognitive theory highlights relatively dynamic and situation-specific features of the self system, especially qualities that enable individuals to exercise personal agency" (Lent, Hackett, and Brown 1996, p. 5).

Chartrand and Rose (1996) also address the increasing need for career development theories and "interventions that address the concerns of economically and occupationally disadvantaged

persons" (p. 341). These persons are often referred to as at risk and often find themselves at the intersection of gender, race, and class. This distinction often translates into limited access to "educational and occupational opportunities" (p. 341). Although this has clear implications for at-risk populations, there are also clear implications for society in general. Those individuals with access to ongoing educational opportunities that include occasions for career aspiration, exploration, and development *generally* do not find themselves involved in the cycle of problems and concomitant social problems.

This further highlights the inherent value and worth of SCCT in that it recognizes environmental influences or opportunities. Chartrand and Rose (1996) state further: "When working with at-risk clients, we believe that it is particularly important to address environmental barriers to their career development and to have these individuals explore beliefs not only about themselves but also about their environment" (p. 343).

## *Summary*

What is evident from these theories of vocational choice and career development is that there is no one set procedure or style for everyone. Clearly, vocational choice and career development are influenced by who we are and how we perceive ourselves fitting into the larger social and economic arena. This perception is influenced by one's self-concept as well as how one sextypes occupations. In addition, career choice is clearly influenced by gender, race, and class.

As discussed earlier, Gottfredson (1981) provided an early model for exploring the relationship between perceived barriers and career choice and subsequent development. Greene-Black (as cited in Luzzo 1996) stated that "perceptions of occupational barriers have been characterized as factors that may erode students' self-confidence and complicate the career planning process" (p. 239). SCCT refined this model specifically to address individual achievement and perseverance. Thus it is important not only to attempt to identify barriers that may be encountered because of one's gender, race, and/or class, but also attempt to define and develop coping strategies so that the career awareness, choice, and development process may be most fruitful for each individual.

# Issues and Barriers Related to Career Choice and Development

Career *choice* implies that one has a number of options from which to choose. Although that may be the case in theory, when the issues of gender, race, and class are introduced, the choices are often different, fewer, or nonexistent or the choices may be affected by barriers. For this discussion, barriers are those concepts which may create a gap between ability and achievement (Swanson, Daniels, and Tokar 1996).

Too often those individuals—classroom teachers and counselors—who are in the best possible position to help all students grow into whomever or whatever they choose are also those individuals who, consciously or not, construct barriers to career choice. ***Teacher Expectancies*** (Dusek 1985) is dedicated to a discussion of the influence of teacher expectations on student achievement. Two chapters in the text provide thoughtful discussions regarding the influence of social class, race, and gender on teacher expectations and thus, ultimately on student achievement. Gender, race, and social class easily provide the teacher's first impression of a student. This "front-end" stereotyping makes it much more difficult for that student to separate him/herself from others who *appear* similar.

In a meta-analysis of 16 experimental studies of the effect of student race (black vs. white) on teacher expectations, Baron, Tom, and Cooper (1985) found five studies with statistically significant results. In all five studies, teacher participants exhibited higher expectations for white students. The authors also conducted a meta-analysis of 11 studies that examined the effect of social class of students on teacher expectations. Four of the 11 studies found a significant effect favoring middle-class students.

Luzzo (1996) studied the perception of occupational barriers and career development in undergraduate college students. He found "a significant, negative relationship . . . between CDM (career

decision making) self-efficacy and the number of future barriers perceived. . . . This inverse relationship indicates that the more future career-related barriers a student perceives, the lower her or his CDM self-efficacy score is likely to be" (p. 243). However, it is also important to understand that how a barrier is perceived is quite individualistic: what may be perceived as a barrier to some may simply serve as a motivator to others.

The following discussion provides a review of literature that paints a clear picture of the extent to which gender, race, and class effect and affect career choice and development.

## *Gender*

Hackett and Betz (1981) posited that women's socialization experiences are connected with their self-efficacy. Their self-efficacy approach to the career development of women was based on Albert Bandura's social learning theory. According to Bandura (cited in Hackett and Betz), "behavior and behavior change are mediated primarily by expectations of personal efficacy ( i.e., expectations or beliefs that one can successfully perform a given behavior)" (pp. 327-328). In other words, if I think I can do something, attempt it and am successful, I am more likely to continue to believe I am capable of changing my own self and my goals. What is critical here is an awareness of how one's efficacy expectations and one's outcome expectations differ. An efficacy expectation is what one believes about the performance of a behavior. "Low self-efficacy expectations may prevent a person from attempting to perform a task even if he or she is relatively certain that performance of that task would lead to desired outcomes" (p. 328). "An outcome expectation is . . . a belief about the *consequences* of behavior" (p. 328). Societal attitudes and circumstances may certainly affect both one's efficacy expectations as well as one's outcome expectations. If a woman with low self-efficacy finds herself in a sextyped situation, she may well not be willing to attempt to challenge status quo because of her perceptions of the consequences of that behavior. Thus, the strength of a woman's personal or self-efficacy is directly related to the pursuit and achievement of a career that is compatible with her abilities. A weak or strong self-efficacy will also determine how a woman copes with and manages internal and external career-related barriers (Hackett and Betz 1981). This work by Hackett and Betz is a foundational study in establishing self-efficacy theory as an extremely appropriate basis for the career development of women. This narrative

provides an uncomplicated explanation of the connection between the two.

An important aspect of effective career development is an accurate self-estimate of skills and abilities. This may be especially difficult for adult women who may be reentering the work force. In a sample of adult working women, Betsworth (1997) assessed how accurately they examined their own abilities. She determined that these high-ability women had a tendency to underestimate a number of their abilities such as learning, verbal, and spatial. As this finding is consistent with other research and because of the role of self-assessment in career counseling, it is important that ability information be based on objective measures gathered from more than one source.

Research in vocational career development of women has referred to the potentially strong influence of what one perceives to be both opportunities and barriers in education and the work force. McWhirter (1997) investigated this perception of educational and career barriers and ethnic and gender differences in a sample of Mexican-American and Euro-American high school students. Participants cited ethnic and sex discrimination as barriers. Also cited as educational barriers were "financial problems, family attitudes, perceived lack of ability, lack of fit, and lack of interest" (p. 128). Students reported their own gender, ethnicity, school year, and age. Their socioeconomic status was determined by rating their parents' occupations according to the Socioeconomic Index. The students' perceptions regarding educational and career barriers were determined by their responses to a list of 24 items. McWhirter found that "females were more likely to anticipate sex discrimination and less likely to anticipate ethnic discrimination in their future jobs than were males. . . . Females were more likely than males to agree that if they did not go to college, it would be because of 'lack of interest' and because it wouldn't help my future'" (p. 133).

This perception of a potential "lack of interest" in college or that they did not anticipate that college would help their future intimates that an important part of career development for high school females would include reinforcing the value and relevance of postsecondary education. Curiously, McWhirter (1997) also found that, despite barriers to their educational and career goals, "males and females were equally confident that they could *overcome*" them (p. 136). This issue of dealing with *perceived* barriers is key to the social cognitive career theory discussed earlier.

The age at which these perceived barriers are addressed is key to their long-term impact on career development, but more important, on their self-efficacy. Post, Williams, and Brubaker (1996) "examined differences by sex in the curricular, career, and lifestyle expectations of rural eighth-grade students" (p. 251). Each of 202 students from a rural middle school in North Carolina completed a 19-item questionnaire that asked their "expectations of taking math and science classes in high school, post-high school education and work plans, desired career goals and possibility of achieving these goals, and lifestyle expectations" (p. 252). These authors found that "the academic aspirations and post-high school plans of boys and girls were not traditional" (p. 255), complimenting existing research regarding the fact that at the middle-school level gender differences are minimal.

Burnett, Anderson, and Heppner (1995) defined *environmental press* "as the implicit and explicit cues an individual receives from others about how he or she should think, feel, and behave" (p. 324). These authors investigated the interaction between personal masculinity and femininity and environmental presses for each or the extent to which study participants felt social pressure to exhibit masculine rather than feminine qualities. The study participants, 236 undergraduate students, completed the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ), the Personal Attributes Questionnaire-Environmental form (PAQ-env), and the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory. The PAQ measures qualities traditionally labeled as masculine such as independence and competitiveness and qualities traditionally labeled as feminine such as warmth and devotion to others. The researchers hypothesized that the participants' masculinity rather than femininity would be more strongly related to self-esteem and that they would also perceive stronger environmental press for masculinity than for femininity.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the findings of Burnett et al. (1995) supported these hypotheses that masculine traits were more highly regarded than feminine traits. This is probably reflective of a cultural bias toward greater valuing of masculine qualities. These findings also speak to the concept that gender roles grow out of cultural contexts, contexts in which young people develop their own personal traits. Counselors should be mindful of the person *as well as* his or her environment in the counseling process.

Luzzo (1995a) determined that gender does make a difference in the career maturity and perceived barriers to careers in a selected group of college students. Luzzo's findings yielded interesting data.

The female participants' scores for career-mature attitudes, career decision-making skills, and vocational congruence were significantly higher than male participants' scores. The qualitative analysis, however, indicated that these same female participants were more inclined to perceive role conflicts and barriers as obstacles in their career development process. Women frequently raised concerns regarding issues of children and child care as potential career barriers. Of the 151 male participants, only 3 raised similar concerns as potential barriers.

The qualitative analysis in Luzzo's (1995a) work established that these women had more actively planned their career decision process than the men. Why? It may well be that women are more clearly aware of real and potential barriers and have developed appropriate coping mechanisms to deal with them effectively. Because of life experiences (e.g., child rearing), women may be more experienced in developing needed coping mechanisms that may transfer in part to the career decision-making process.

Luzzo (1995b) noted the significance of Gottfredson's (1981) theory regarding the extent to which one's self-concept and perception of occupational accessibility influence career choice. From a group of 188 community college undergraduates, Luzzo sought to determine if there was a connection between their past and future career-related barriers and their Career Decision Making (CDM) attitudes, skills, and self-efficacy. He also analyzed gender and ethnic discrepancies in their perceptions of these barriers. The Career Maturity Inventory's Attitude Scale measured their CDM attitudes; the Career Development Inventory-College and University Form measured their career decision-making skills; and the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale determined their level of CDM self-efficacy. Luzzo used two simple questions to discover their perceptions of barriers: "(1) What barriers do you believe you have overcome to get to where you are today in terms of your career development? (2) What barriers do you believe you will have to overcome in the future to fully achieve your career aspiration?" (p. 9). The responses to the "barrier questions" were coded and categorized into six types: "family-related barriers, study skills barriers , ethnic identity barriers, gender-identity barriers, financial barriers, and age-related barriers" (p. 10).

The only significant relationship existed between gender and the perception of past family-related barriers. No significant relationships appeared between past career-related barriers and any of the career development measures investigated. A statistically significant [but meager, $r = -.17$], negative relationship emerged

between self-efficacy and perception of future barriers; thus, the lower one's self-esteem, the more likely one may be to believe that barriers will exist to a career choice. Luzzo's (1995b) data analysis did reveal, however, that students with past family-related barriers exhibited "higher levels of CDM self-efficacy and more mature CDM attitudes than their counterparts who did not perceive such barriers" (p. 13). Perhaps this is reflective of the attitude of others who posit that barriers may indeed be obstacles to some and motivators to others.

Zunker (1994) further emphasized the extent to which environmental factors (e.g., home and family responsibility) influence women's career choice. This is in addition to the existing sextyping of occupations and counselors who have difficulty in helping women choose careers the counselor views as nontraditional.

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### Summary

In summary, women's career development needs *are* different from men's needs. Part of the difference is driven simply by individual differences; however, a more significant difference is driven by societal or external factors such as sex discrimination or sextyping of occupations, much of which women are unable to control in large part. The career counselor's role requires acknowledgment of these differences as a tool to use in developing the most appropriate career choice and development pattern possible. Tied with an understanding of these differences is the need for an accurate self-assessment of abilities. This process is intimately related to one's level of self-efficacy and, as such, the impact on career choice may be significant.

## *Race*

Although career development literature is replete with studies on gender, the list diminishes when one looks at the research on career development and race. This section reviews related research with African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Native Americans.

### African Americans

In their review of research on career development of African American women, Hackett and Byars (1996) point out that little work has been done on the effect of "cultural influences on career

self-efficacy" (p. 322), which is a cornerstone of the SCCT. Hackett and Byars elected to emphasize African American women for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the "double jeopardy of racism and sexism" (p. 323). These authors use the four sources of efficacy information developed by Bandura as the major topics for explaining how each of these sources of self-efficacy "may be influenced by traditional, mainstream gender socialization" (p. 324). The four sources are performance accomplishments, vicarious learning, physiological and affective states, and verbal persuasion.

*Performance Accomplishments*. Performance accomplishments are those situations in which what we do—our performance—is judged in some way, i.e., rewarded or punished. "The inability of African American girls and women to predict how the environment will respond to behavior or performance can be attributed, in part, to barriers that are either real or perceived (e.g., job discrimination, racism, prejudice, sexism) and that operate on a societal as well as on an individual level" (p. 325). One such situation may be a case where the same performance is evaluated differently based on race. This is a situation in which one's self-efficacy or efficacy beliefs determine whether the individual is defeated or recognizes the situation for what it is and develops a coping strategy. Ogbu (1991) posits that black students may be characterized by what he calls the "low-effort syndrome or lack of persevering academic effort" (p. 437). He suggests that this syndrome emanates from community influences such as "black folk theories of getting ahead under a castelike stratification, disillusionment over the job ceiling which gives rise to ambivalence about schooling, ambivalent or oppositional group identity and cultural frame of reference, and conflict with and distrust of the public school and white people who control them" (p. 452). Hackett and Byars (1996) go on to state that "social class seems to exert a strong influence on the manifestation of the low-effort syndrome" (p. 328).

Some research, however, reports that for African American women "their early gender role socialization is usually less sex typed. . . . Because of family makeup and economics, African American girls often experience more crossover between traditionally male and female roles and duties in the household, because every member of the family has to do whatever it takes to survive" (ibid., p. 329). This early at-home experience may well provide a dichotomy for the young girl in school who is the subject of subtle and not-so-subtle racism and sexism: at home my performance is applauded and at school my performance is negated. At the minimum these young women need help in understanding that "even successful

performance accomplishments may not pay off" (p. 329). What must partner this understanding, however, is help in developing "strong efficacy beliefs" that will better equip the young woman to cultivate coping behaviors.

*Vicarious Learning*. Vicarious learning has been determined to influence self-efficacy. One such example is modeling, which can be useful but only to the extent to which the "models or modeled activities are personally relevant to the observer" (Hackett and Byars, 1996, p. 330). Bandura (cited in Hackett and Byars) states further that "the types of models that dominate in a given social context will determine which qualities and behaviors are selectively nurtured, promoted, and activated. . . . The social cognitive literature indicates that a variety of relevant models are critical to developing realistic and robust self-efficacy" (p. 330). The difficulty for African American girls is the paucity of appropriate female models. It is also critical that these models from whom African American girls learn fitting coping strategies are similar in age and socioeconomic status.

The enormous impact of vicarious learning is perhaps best evidenced through familial impact when the young girl's family openly exhibits a distrust of "the system." This distrust ultimately has a negative effect on her school work. The African American girl's mother is clearly the most influential "model" in her life. In fact, "the mother's educational level profoundly influences achievement, self-esteem, and most likely, self-efficacy. The mother's modeling effects are highly salient to the daughter because of gender, cultural, and class relevance, as well as the maternal bond" (Hackett and Byars 1996, p. 332). In counseling African American girls, then, it is critical that they are exposed to a wide variety of appropriate models who demonstrate not only mastery but also coping skills.

*Physiological and Affective States*. Anxiety can be both a positive and negative motivator. Continual stress (e.g., dealing with racism every day) can have a deleterious effect on self-efficacy. Thus it is critical for those involved in career development with minority students to learn "to deal with the reality of racism and how it may affect their career-related behavior. In social cognitive theory, this can be reconceptualized as enhancing effective cognitive appraisal skills and developing strong efficacy for coping with racism" (Hackett and Byars 1996, p. 333).

***Verbal Persuasion.*** There really is no a replacement for positive verbal persuasion from those adults whom a child respects and loves. Hackett and Byars discuss the concept that all children hear and often ultimately own their parents' messages about how the system works. The *content* of those messages will have a positive or negative effect on one's self-efficacy and ultimately on who one becomes. Not only can positive parental verbal persuasion help a young person learn to develop coping behavior to deal with racism but it can also affect academic and career self-efficacy.

The factors of performance accomplishments, vicarious learning, physiological and affective states, and verbal persuasion clearly influence the career development of African American women. How these factors are dealt with in the classroom, by a career counselor, and by the family—immediate and extended—clearly determine the level of self-efficacy a young person develops.

Parham and Austin's (1994) discussion of racial identity theory and the nigrescence construct illustrates its relevance in career counseling with African Americans. In explaining nigrescence as a model of African self-consciousness, they posit that because the lives of many African American people have been molded by their experiences, particularly racism and discrimination, they have developed assumptions about who they are, what their feelings are about themselves and others, what opportunities might be open to them, and what coping strategies are needed to meet their goals. As one moves through this model of African self-consciousness, one may progress from "a perception of self-degradation to self-pride" (p. 140). The understanding of this model is critically important in the career counseling process: although it might be more facile to group people by major factors (e.g., race), differences within the group are significant and must also be addressed.

Although Parham and Austin (1994) note relevant concerns of applying current career development theories to African Americans, they also recognize that these theories have been used successfully within that population. However, they also address the need to recognize the shortcomings in established career development theories. In light of this, the authors suggest a need to examine the "influence of racial identity attitudes" (p. 145) on values orientation, perceptions of opportunities and occupational stereotyping, the influence of significant others on career decision making, and work force diversity. This examination can help individuals in career counseling to learn more about themselves as well

as the work communities in which they seek employment. A part of the process includes developing coping strategies as needed.

Evans and Herr (1994) investigated "(a) how African Americans feel about themselves—self-concept and (b) how African Americans feel about their environment—discrimination in the workplace" (p. 174) to determine how self-concept or racial identity and workplace discrimination influence career aspirations. "Racial identity attitudes [as measured by the Racial Identity Attitude Scale] were not significantly related to traditional career aspirations of African American women. . . . Neither perception of discrimination against African Americans nor perception of discrimination against women were significantly related to the career aspirations of women" (pp. 179-181). This translates into the fact that, even after successive generation of discrimination in both career choice and in the workplace, African Americans have learned coping strategies through which they have been able to achieve vocational success. Career counselors who work with African Americans need to be aware of these "perceptions of discrimination and self-imposed boundaries in career aspirations" (p. 182).

The literature on career aspirations, choice, and development has established that job opportunities are not evenly shared based on gender and ethnicity. Arbona and Novy (1991) reported that, based on Holland's typology, women are more likely to be found in greater numbers in Social and Conventional occupations, and "Black and Hispanic men and women are over-represented in low-level Realistic jobs and under-represented in all other types of work" (p. 231). The dissonance this creates between aspirations and availability must be addressed in order for career counseling to be effective. These authors sought answers to these questions, "(a) To what extent are ethnic group membership and gender related to beginning college students' career aspirations and expectations? and (b) What is the correspondence between students' career expectations and the distribution of jobs in the labor market?" (p. 232). The answers to an open-ended question addressing these statements were coded according to ***Dictionary of Holland Occupational Codes***. Arbona and Novy found no ethnic differences with regard to career aspirations. There was a statistically significant, albeit weak, relationship between ethnicity and career expectations for men and women. The authors also determined that "the association between gender and career aspirations was statistically significant for Mexican American and White students but not for Blacks" (pp. 235-236), which was the same finding with regard to career expectations. These findings suggest that gender may be more highly associated with career choice than ethnicity.

## Hispanics

In an extensive review of literature on career counseling and Hispanics, Arbona (1990) concluded that Hispanic students do have high occupational and educational aspirations. Hispanics also have one of the highest dropout rates in the United States. Thus, one dilemma is the maintenance of these high aspirations as well as academic success throughout the educational experience so the goals may ultimately be achieved. She also concluded that "the lack of occupational mobility among Hispanics is related to structural factors, such as socioeconomic status and lack of opportunities, not to cultural characteristics" (p. 300).

Because Hispanics comprise one of the fastest growing minority groups in this country, their successful entry into the work force is of importance to all. Arbona (1995) cautioned us to be mindful that just, as with any other ethnic/racial group, experiences and therefore needs of one group (e.g., lower class) will be different from those of another group (e.g., middle class). Her research also established that socioeconomic factors such as parental education and occupational standing as well as culturally related factors such as level of acculturation and experience of discrimination must be acknowledged and considered in effective career development with Hispanics.

Bores-Rangel, Church, Szendre, and Reeves (1990) tested self-efficacy theory in relation to occupational consideration and academic performance in a group of 35 high school equivalency program students (31 Hispanic, 2 Native American, 2 Anglo-American). All these students' families were migrant or seasonal farm workers. This study found a positive relationship between the degree of consideration of occupational activities and interest, self-efficacy, and incentives satisfaction. This means that those study participants with "greater range of interests and greater generality of self-efficacy consider a greater range of occupational activities" (p. 413). For these students, self-efficacy predicted consideration of educational programs to a similar degree as it predicted consideration of occupations. These findings support previous research cited here regarding the value of self-efficacy determination as well as its role in career choice.

Because of the small sample size in the Bores-Rangel et al. (1990) study, Church, Teresa, Rosebrook, and Szendre (1992) replicated the study with 85 minority high school equivalency students from the same program. These authors also investigated gender

differences as they may relate to consideration of male-dominated versus female-dominated occupations, the relationship between actual aptitude and generality of self-efficacy, and the effect of ethnicity and level of acculturation to mainstream (white) America. This study supported the findings of Bores-Rangel et al. in that a relationship existed between the students' self-efficacy generality, "range of interests and range of occupations perceived as satisfying the students' most important occupational incentive" (pp. 503-504). These three variables also predicted the breadth of occupations these students would consider. As with the Bores-Rangel et al. study, these findings support the value of the use of self-efficacy in career choice with minority students.

### Asian Americans

Little research has been conducted with Asian Americans regarding career aspiration, choice, and development. As Parham and Austin (1994) pointed out, counselors need to be more closely attuned to clients' individuality within a larger racial, class, or gender group. One's culture is becoming an increasingly important aspect in the career counseling process in the United States because of the recent and dramatic change in demographics that will continue into the 21st century.

Leong and Serafica (1995) speak of the continuing dilemma of Asian American students who may choose a career directly reflective of their personal career interests but who later may accede to parental pressure. Therefore, it would be wise to explore separately the career interests and career choices of Asian Americans. These authors also question the power of self-concept as an explanatory concept as it relates to both European and Asian Americans. One's self-concept is central to and a driving force behind effective career development. This can produce a dissonant situation for an Asian American in the career development process given a culture that underscores a collective versus an individualistic orientation.

Leong (1991) sought to determine if Asian American college students have different career development attributes, e.g., career maturity, than do white American college students. Leong found that Asian Americans have a higher level of Dependent decision-making style than do white Americans while exhibiting a lower career maturity score as determined by Crites' Career Maturity Inventory-Attitudes Scale. These Asian American students also placed greater significance on Extrinsic values (making a lot of money, status, prestige) and Security (a stable future) than did white Americans.

These findings may be reflective of cultural differences where a denial of self for the good of the group is commonplace. Leong (1991) suggested that counselors may find that Asian American clients may seek a "more directive and structured approach to career counseling" (p. 228). This knowledge and the understanding of career as more of a pragmatic choice rather than expression of self for Asian Americans may aid in the career counseling process.

Leong and Tata (1990) studied sex and acculturation differences of occupational values among a group of 177 Chinese American fifth and sixth graders in a large western inner-city elementary school. The acculturation score (low, medium, high) for each of these children was determined via the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation scale. A high acculturation score, for example, indicated that the student was well assimilated into Western culture. Leong and Tata found that "boys valued object orientation, self-realization, and ideas-data more than did girls. Girls valued altruism more than did boys" (p. 210). The high-acculturation students also valued self-realization more than did low- or medium-acculturation Chinese American students. This last finding may reflect a gradual distance between acquiescing to elder and family wishes and moving toward more personal, individual occupational choice.

Frost and Diamond (1979) in an early study examined future occupational choices as well as perceptions of occupational stereotypes of a group of fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade students from Southern California. Given a list of 14 adult occupations and 3 types of children's work, these students were asked, "Who can do this job?" Here boys were more likely to stereotype than were girls. Black girls were also more inclined to "exclude men more often from adult female-stereotyped jobs than did Hispanics or Anglos" (p. 49). These children were also asked what they wanted to be when they grew up. The girls chose sex-appropriate occupations such as teacher or secretary with doctor being the one exception. Anglo girls chose "more nontraditional, higher-status occupations" (p. 47), whereas Black girls chose sex-appropriate and low-status jobs such as housekeeper. The boys' choices were traditional and also demonstrated no effect between occupational choice and ethnic group. These findings speak to the invaluable process of helping elementary school children learn about the widest possible variety of occupations. This early exposure may help them dispel myths they may hold not only about sex-appropriate occupations but also about their own occupational choices.

## Native Americans

Lauver and Jones (1991) sought to determine those factors which may be associated with perceived career options for American Indian, white, and Hispanic rural high school students. The students were also given a list of occupations, each of which was designated as predominately female (PFO) or predominately male (PMO), where they had to indicate whether or not they had considered this kind of work. These authors found that self-efficacy and range of perceived options for both PFOs and PMOs were positively related. Lauver and Jones also found self-esteem and SES [socioeconomic status] to be moderately related to self-efficacy for Hispanics and whites. Self-esteem was also mildly related to self-efficacy for PMOs and SES. "Female gender was mildly inversely related to self-esteem for all ethnic groups" (p. 161). Differences in gender for perceived range of options and self-efficacy for PFOs and PMOs were also observed. American Indians and Hispanics also reported a wider range of options for PFOs and self-efficacy for PFOs. A significant finding of this study is that these rural high school girls appear to be less bound by tradition with regard to perceived career options than was anticipated. These authors concluded that, although Hispanics and American Indians expressed high occupational aspirations, their expectations for achieving them was lower. American Indians also expressed lower self-efficacy estimates. This study points to the continuing value of assessing self-efficacy as a part of the career choice process as well as the need to broaden career options for males and females.

With Native Americans, just as with other ethnic groups, one must be aware of and sensitive to the cultural heritage of the many tribes (Johnson, Swartz, and Martin 1995). Native Americans also have significantly higher dropout and unemployment rates than does the general population. Thus, the Native American student's perception of career development may be a skewed one. Johnson et al. identify work knowledge, external pressure, and culture-fair assessment as critical issues in the career development process for Native Americans.

Herring (1990) discussed career myths about Native Americans. He defined career myths "as irrational attitudes about the career development process" (p. 13). There are a number of influences on career myths for Native Americans. First, there is little research on the career needs of Native Americans. Second is the perpetuation of the negative Native American stereotype. Third is the lack of career awareness in Native American youth. Herring suggested

that, because of these differences between majority and minority youth, access to needed career awareness and related opportunities is often restricted or denied. For Native Americans, this may result in either underemployment or unemployment.

### Summary

Recognizing individual and group differences when working with racial and ethnic minorities is critical to successful career development. The limitations of current career development theories as they relate to minorities must also be considered.

Many of these authors determined that there is little ethnic difference with regard to career *aspirations*; however, that changes when factors such as socioeconomic status, occupational stereotyping, and parental or family pressures are considered. Those who work in the career guidance arena need to be aware of the impact of all these factors—internal and external—as they relate to the career development process. The need for further research, especially with Hispanics and Native Americans, is also readily apparent.

**“**

**There is little ethnic difference with regard to career *aspirations*; however, that changes when factors such as socioeconomic status, occupational stereotyping, and parental or family pressures are considered.**

**”**

## *Class*

Although the basic career development needs of low-income people are similar to those of other minority groups, the attitudes career counselors may have *toward* the poor may differ and, thus, the counsel the poor receive may differ. So it is valuable to look at those circumstances in which the poor live and may work that have a direct impact on their career aspirations and opportunities.

Meara, Davis, and Robinson (1997) suggested that some of the basic assumptions regarding career choice should be reconsidered when counseling low-income persons. Some of these include the fact that all aspects of the career choice process involve some degree of futuring, planning, self-evaluation, and independence. These authors ask a key question: "What do our theories and empirical methods have to offer persons who are clearly nontraditional in the ways we think of career choice, development, and adjustment?" (p. 118). For that nontraditional person who is able to look only at today, whose idea of planning may of necessity focus on what to have for the next meal, who believes they are who and what others have labeled them, and who have no concept of free choice, conventional career counseling strategies may hold little or no relevance.

**“**

**The attitudes career counselors may have *toward* the poor may differ and, thus, the counsel the poor receive may differ.**

**”**

Although traditional assessment instruments are extremely useful in the career choice process, the poor are not usually represented in the groups with whom these instruments have been normed. As Betz (1990) stated, "It is difficult, if not impossible, to construct a test independent of a cultural context. Most intelligence and aptitude tests in use were constructed in the context of a White, middle-class value system" (pp. 428-429). This presents a variety of problems for the socioeconomically disadvantaged who may have little formal education, who are not well read or traveled, or who have never found themselves in such an assessment environment before. The potential negative influence of family and sextyped perceptions of "appropriate occupations" are other issues that may arise (Meara, Davis, and Robinson 1997).

Meara et al. (1997) stated further that "values, needs, career saliency, career maturity, self-efficacy, and career beliefs are a few examples of variables that influence career choice" (p. 122). Again, individuals from low socioeconomic backgrounds perhaps have never had the luxury of choice with regard to life's necessities to say nothing of choice with regard to life's work. This presents a situation of helping these clients learn how to think differently about themselves and the possibilities and opportunities that are open to them. In this situation the counselor's role is critically important. If the counselor's experience is only with a middle-class clientele, this different relationship will be more difficult. "The process of bridging client-counselor differences to form an alliance involves beginning with what the counselor knows and then putting cultural differences in the context of how to understand the client in a manner which encourages the client's strengths" (p. 126). Serious consideration and implementation of the approaches Meara et al. propose do indeed "seem worthy of our best science and practice and of our highest ambitions for promoting human welfare through public policy" (p. 132).

Conroy (1997) investigated the influences on career choice of rural youth. In a theme similar to that of Meara et al's *possible selves*, she states "all of the social, family, and personal experiences of an adolescent interact to form his/her image of a *future self*" (p. 3). Clearly this image may be positive or negative. Conroy attempted to identify ideal jobs, self-esteem, family communications patterns, and workplace skills in a group of students in grades 7-12 in a rural Pennsylvania school district. She found that many students aspired "to professional jobs and their accompanying higher status" (p. 10) as well as higher salaries. There was little or no congruence with the jobs to which these students aspired and the reality of the jobs available or beginning salaries in their geographic area. Although

the study yielded interesting data, the majority, 81.3%, "of the variance in ideal job scores is unexplained by this model" (p. 13).

Conroy (1997) further suggested that perhaps the students in this study formed an *identity template* before they actually entered the work force. "This template can be thought of as an amalgam of idea/expected work roles and other identities—religious, family, political—based on personal and societal frames of reference" (p. 13). These are factors and identities that must be considered in some fashion in the career counseling process. For the poor and people of color, these factors may be much more influential in the career choice process. Conroy recommends that "thinking conceptually about the career decision-making process as a function of an adolescent's *identity template*—and all its influencing factors—may produce programming designed to reduce the effects of negative human and social capital" (p. 16).

Brown, Darden, Shelton, and Dipoto (1997) investigated the relationship of career decision-making self-efficacy to career exploration of a group of urban and suburban high school students. Based on oft-reported research that career opportunities for urban youth are often restricted by poverty and lack of exposure to a variety of choices, these authors hypothesized "that suburban students would score significantly higher on career exploration and career decision-making self-efficacy as compared to their urban counterparts" (p. 5). Perhaps unexpectedly, the hypothesis was not supported. The urban students demonstrated greater career exploration behaviors than did the suburban students. One possible explanation for this finding is a greater focus and need on earlier career preparation amongst the urban population.

Loughead, Liu, and Middleton (1995) evaluated PRO-100, a career development program for inner-city, impoverished youth. They report that there is no difference between the career interests or aspirations of majority and minority youth. The difference is, however, that "minorities . . . have lower expectations of achieving their occupational aspirations, which may be a function of the societal economic, educational, and discriminatory barriers or of structural factors, such as socioeconomic status and lack of opportunity. . . . Bias and stereotyping in combination with societal and organizational barriers inhibit the career development of many minority individuals" (p. 275).

The PRO-100 career development program (Loughead et al. 1995) is composed of two distinct elements: work experience and career development. The work experience element is believed to be

critical to career development for at-risk youth. The PRO-100 "participants came from an impoverished environment that lacked productive work role models, a positive work ethic, or an esteemed value for paid work" (p. 282). For many of these youth work simply meant survival. To contemplate short- or long-range career planning was plainly not a consideration. The authors conclude that "overall, these data seem to indicate that at-risk youth, and perhaps at-risk populations in general, are in need of gaining successful job securing skills and work habits, which contribute to transferable life skills, before moving on to higher order career needs such as career decision making, career planning, and job satisfaction" (p. 282). A valuable lesson from this study is that counselors must make careful *practical* assessments of where their clients are in their life's journey before working on a *theoretical* assessment of career maturity, aspirations, or aptitudes. A practical assessment may begin by evaluating one's basic decision-making process as it relates to everyday life. From there, one's work and life skills, work experience and related success or failure, as well as short-term goals should be determined and evaluated. Based on this practical assessment, a theoretical assessment using career maturity and aptitude indices can lay the foundation for later career choice.

Zunker (1994) distinguishes between the urban poor and the rural poor. He suggests that vocational opportunities and choices for the urban poor are often severely restricted with no opportunity for advancement or tenure. Parents of these urban youth may have also faced the same situations and thus are not inclined to have high career aspirations for their children. "Poor Appalachian Whites . . . are characterized as holding on to past traditions, being highly individualistic and action-oriented, and avoiding long-term commitments. Families are very mobile, marriage occurs at an early age, and there is little emphasis on education" (p. 393). These youth, too, have little exposure to strong, adult, successfully employed role models. Thus, the career counseling needs of these two groups of youth are quite similar.

Using data gathered from a group of socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals in the Denver area, Miller and Oetting (1977) determined a group of four employment barriers commonly encountered by ethnic groups and, thus, often the poor: "job qualifications, social and interpersonal conflicts, legal and financial problems, and emotional problems" (p. 90). In addition to employment barriers, the poor may also face "single-item barriers [which] included child care or other family responsibilities, transportation, drinking, drug abuse, and health-related problems"

(p. 90). Any successful counseling strategy must take these two groups of barriers into consideration when working with the poor.

Sue and Sue (1990) developed a minority identity model that describes the psychosocial development of minority group members. The five stages are—

Stage 1. *Conformity*—the individual is self-deprecating and has a preference for dominant group values.
Stage 2. *Dissonance*—the individual develops conflicts between both self-deprecating and appreciating and dominant group appreciating and deprecating.
Stage 3. *Resistance and immersion*—the individual moves to become more self-appreciating and rejects the dominant group.
Stage 4. *Introspection*—the individual carefully evaluates his or her attitude toward self and recognizes the intensity of negative attitudes toward the dominant group, becoming increasingly aware of the energy expended in negative thought that could and should be spent in further self-analysis.
Stage 5. *Synergetic articulation and awareness*—the individual embraces his or her own cultural identity and develops selective trust and appreciation for the dominant group.

This transformation process is also needed by socioeconomically disadvantaged persons in that they often view themselves as different from the dominant culture. Thus, counselors would need to be sensitive to a client's journey as it twists and turns through these stages, recognizing that because of the barriers discussed earlier, the route may be less than direct.

Penick and Jepsen (1992) reported that "family background factors found to be associated with career development include parents' socioeconomic status (SES), their educational level, and biogenetic factors such as physical size, gender, ability, and temperament" (p. 208). Their research focused on family systems propositions applied to youth career development. Their family systems theory posits that the family unit develops relationships peculiar to itself. When a change occurs in any family member, that will generate concomitant changes in other family members. This family systems theory further supports the premise that one's primary mental health or illness rests with the family as opposed to the individual.

Based on data gathered from 215 volunteer students from a rural high school and their parents, Penick and Jepsen (1992) sought to

determine the extent or strength of the relationship between family functioning and career planning and certainty of choice. They also investigated the extent to which gender, achievement, and socioeconomic status interacted with family functioning. "The results showed that family members' perceptions of whole family unit interaction explained more variance in vocational identity than achievement, gender, and socioeconomic status in three of four Vocational Identity Scales regression equations. Family functioning explained twice as much variance as achievement, gender, and socioeconomic status in the two best Career Planning Involvement Scale equations" (p. 219).

Penick and Jepsen (1992) suggest that these findings are significant for those students from "enmeshed families" who may find it difficult to discern their own goals apart from those of their parents. Youth from "disengaged families" may find themselves in the opposite situation where they receive no family support. These findings are also significant for impoverished youth in those cases where their families take on either of these characteristics. This study also points to the need for family-related issues to be included in the career counseling process.

Brown (1980) stated that "in 1946, Weber used the term 'life-chance' to describe those opportunities which distinguish the quality of one's life. Statistics on the American economy indicate that many of the most important life chances (education, occupation, income opportunities) are distributed unequally in accordance with socioeconomic standing . . . there is a positive relationship between class and opportunity" (p. 1). Slightly more than 50 years later, this is still true. She suggests that where one lives—literally and figuratively, one's "cultural environment"—either prohibits or promotes the social and intellectual capacities for individual motivation. This may lead one to conclude that education affects aspirations.

## Summary

In some ways, the career development needs of the poor are different. In many other ways, however, their needs are no different from any other human being: a wish to do better, to go farther, to be able to participate more fully in the riches that life in these United States has to offer. These needs, though, are exacerbated by a reality that does not afford a variety of educational experiences, does not provide multiple role models, and often, because of family background factors, does not celebrate a break from

traditional career choice. Effective, focused, and ongoing career counseling is inextricably connected with these needs.

# Strategies in Career Choice and Development

Obviously, all who work with learners of any age are influenced by their life experiences. What often happens is that we develop an ethnocentric approach to life whereby our view of reality is influenced by our own cultural experiences and background. However, the likelihood is great that all those with whom we work are to some greater or lesser degree different. How those differences are perceived and dealt with in the guidance process is critical to the effectiveness of the guidance process. Marsella and Leong (1995) suggest that cross-cultural issues should be integrated throughout the career development process. They further suggest the inclusion of the "etic" and the "emic," two cross-cultural psychological approaches, in the career development process. The *etic* "is concerned with discovering universal laws of behavior that apply across all or most cultures" (e.g., mental illness), (p. 209). The *emic* "is much more concerned with unique aspects of certain cultures that influence the behaviors of the members of a particular group (e.g., healing practices)" (p. 209). What does this mean for career guidance? The *etic* approach is of greater concern; however Marsella and Leong suggest that both approaches are important in the career guidance effort with culturally different persons.

A variety of strategies are needed to combat a long history of career counseling practices that have been affected by gender, race, and class. The following discussion provides some specific theoretical bases as well as some specific counseling strategies which may be useful.

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## *Social Cognitive Career Theory*

The Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) developed by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) is based on Bandura's self-efficacy theory. It provides an excellent framework from which to develop career choice counseling strategies for those individuals for whom traditional career choice theories have not been successful. The SCCT provides three basic principles that hold critical

ramifications for addressing career/vocational choice obstacles (Brown and Lent 1996). Initially, because of the connection between self-efficacy and vocational choice, any number of individuals may have "already eliminated potentially rewarding occupational possibilities because of faulty self-efficacy beliefs or outcome expectations" (p. 355). Next, an individual's *perception* of potential barriers can temper the relationship between occupational interest and choice, thus "clients may be less likely to translate their interests into choices if they perceive insurmountable barriers to implementing those choices" (p. 355). Finally, as self-efficacy and outcome expectations emanate from performance accomplishments, "modifying faulty self-efficacy percepts and outcome expectations requires the counselor" (p. 355) to create opportunities where individuals are able to experience success and possibly mitigate the effects of previous performance accomplishments.

Thus, Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) suggested three specific approaches that counselors may use to combat the earlier career counseling strategies:

1. Identifying foreclosed occupational options
2. Analyzing barrier perceptions
3. Modifying self-efficacy beliefs

Based on the SCCT framework, in order for career counseling to be most effective, all reasonable occupational options should be explored. This permits the client and counselor to evaluate more realistically options that heretofore may have been eliminated because of low self-efficacy beliefs, inaccurate evaluation of abilities, or the perception of barriers to that particular career. Typically this process involves using a variety of standardized measures in order to assess interests and abilities.

Second, because of the potential of career compromise based on perceived barriers, "it is also important for counselors to help clients identify, analyze, and prepare for possible career choice barriers" (Brown and Lent 1996, p. 361). This process helps the client recognize not only real but also imagined barriers as well as develop appropriate coping strategies for dealing with the barriers.

Finally, those involved in the guidance process should help clients recognize or identify career decisions that may have been based on an incorrect assessment of one's self-efficacy. A more accurate determination of self-efficacy can lead to greater success in both career choice and implementation (Brown and Lent 1996). Here

Brown and Lent point to "perceived performance accomplishments as . . . the most potent source of information for altering self-efficacy beliefs" (p. 362).

The application of the SCCT to career counseling is a three-pronged approach, requiring assessment and strategies to assure the client appropriate guidance for continuing self-efficacy development as well as continuing career success.

O'Brien and Heppner (1996) have suggested using SCCT to train career counselors. This is an interesting approach as it applies the tenets of SCCT to the counselors *themselves* as it relates to *their* career choice. They discussed an advanced seminar in career counseling for graduate students that focused on Bandura's "four determinants of developing robust efficacy beliefs: (a) performance accomplishments, (b) vicarious learning, (c) verbal persuasion, and (d) physiological states and reactions" (p. 369). The study participants began the 6-week seminar by completing the Career Counseling Self-Efficacy Scale developed by O'Brien and Heppner as well as a demographic information sheet, which established that the majority of the participants were white women; however, 18% were Hispanic and 9% were Asian American. This scale was also completed by the participants at the end of the 6 weeks. The graduate students "showed increases in their self-efficacy regarding overall career counseling, general career counseling skills, and applying assessment strategies and current knowledge to career counseling" (p. 375).

Although this group of study participants would, in all likelihood, have a predisposition to a strong self-efficacy, this study established that, for this group, the application of the four tenets of SCCT was successful in modifying self-efficacy beliefs. This is important information relative to using SCCT with women and people of color as a critical aspect of career development.

## *Bandura's Model of Self-Efficacy*

Betz (1992) suggested the use of Bandura's Model of Self-Efficacy as a tool to alter women's career choices. She posited that choice, performance, and persistence with regard to career choice are consequences of one's perceived self-efficacy. Low self-efficacy, "self-efficacy deficit" (p. 24), typically may lead to procrastination or avoidance of career decision making. Betz refers to women's socialization as it relates to career choice and the four sources of

efficacy as established by Bandura. A critical aspect of this process is to introduce male-dominated careers to women who may have been interested in but had perceived barriers to those choices. At the outset these women need successful performance accomplishments in their particular area of interest. This might include specific coursework. The second need is to find appropriate role models who have been successful in the particular field of interest. Third, the women need to learn "anxiety management" (p. 25). This involves being consciously aware of the angst and developing appropriate coping strategies. Finally, the counselor can provide the verbal persuasion and encouragement critically important in this process. From time to time in everyone's life, a cheerleader is important; the role that person plays in terms of overt and covert support is crucial,

The combination of these four strategies in enhancing women's self-efficacy in the career choice process is invaluable. Its success is important not only for the woman but also for all those whose lives she affects.

One additional approach has possibilities for effective guidance across the issues of gender, race, and class. This is the construct of "possible selves." Meara, Day, Chalk, and Phelps (1995) posit the value of this construct, "a form of self-knowledge which provides a link between the self-concept and motivation" (p. 260) as a useful mechanism to link present behavior with future results. The value-added quality of this construct is its individuality in the guidance and counseling process. What this means is that the possible self I may envision for myself will be unlike anyone else's possible self. The subsequent goals that emerge are equally personal. This also enables these goals to be more tangible. Meara et al. also remind us that we must include the hoped-for affective experiences that are a part of our possible selves. For example, if based on my self-knowledge and self-concept I say, "I am a good writer," I add motivation, "If I practice writing about people I may be hired by a newspaper," and then I add the affect, "I am hired by *The New York Times* and win a Pulitzer Prize for my column," my motivation for pursuing the goal is enhanced. The mental image of the affect can become a powerful tool. Thus the possible selves construct is useful in dealing with the issues of gender, race, and class in career guidance and development.

## *Career Development Strategies: Gender*

From a review of recent research, Zunker (1994) surmised that women had specific career-counseling needs. "The needs include (1) job-search skills, (2) occupational information, (3) self-concept clarification, (4) strategies and role models for managing dual roles—homemaker and worker, (5) assertiveness training, (6) information on a variety of working environments, (7) lifestyle clarification, and (8) development toward a value of independence" (p. 352). Zunker established four counseling components designed to help women meet these needs: job-search skills, working climate, lifestyle skills, and support and follow-up.

The focus of the job-search skills component is to help women learn how to cope not only with finding employment but also with discriminatory practices in the workplace. The working climate component prepares women to deal with gender-role stereotyping. Lifestyle skills help women more clearly define their roles and uniqueness as well as how to manage work and family life. The support and follow-up component is exactly that—a clearly defined opportunity for reinforcement of the aspects of the other three skills. Although these components were designed specifically for women, aspects of each could be incorporated into the counseling process for minorities and the socioeconomically disadvantaged.

Several of the career development and related theories previously discussed have their foundation in the concept of self-efficacy or what one believes one is able to do. Key to establishing or determining one's self-efficacy and, thus, develop a career plan is the ability to "take stock of oneself on a number of dimensions, including interests, skills, abilities, values, needs, and lifestyle considerations" (Swanson and Lease 1990, p. 347). The bases for this self-evaluation often include some kind of standardized test (e.g, ACT/SAT), some measure of intelligence, and a self-rating regarding skills and abilities. Swanson and Lease suggest that self-ratings of skills and abilities may vary by gender, opening the possibility that, as Fitzgerald and Betz (as cited in Swanson and Lease) suggested, women consistently underrate their skills and abilities whereas men do not. Swanson and Lease's research found modest support for the hypothesis that men rate themselves higher than do women regarding skills and abilities. This suggests that the use of self-ratings should be strengthened with objective measures. A determination of the client's self-esteem, the extent to which

one is satisfied or dissatisfied with oneself, may also be a useful measure in attempting to establish that the self-rating is a valid one. Lastly, a candid comparison of self-rating and career options under consideration by the client may help the counselor see obvious sextyped expectations that may need to be addressed in some way.

McElhiney (1990) reported on a mentoring program for reentry women developed by Metropolitan State College in Denver, Colorado. The classic mentoring model is one where the mentor *selects* his/her protégé, very much a patriarchal relationship. The significant difference in the Metropolitan State model was that the women did not have to wait to be selected as the protégé. McElhiney (1990) suggests that "perhaps, a mentoring model that resembles a web with the woman herself in the center controlling the strands, instead of a ladder in which the mentor above extends a hand to the woman below, works best for women" (p. 22). Indeed, the very disparate pictures that come to mind of these two similar ideas but very different approaches perhaps reinforces why a change in the mentoring model is needed, especially for reentry women.

Post, Williams, and Brubaker's (1996) research on academic expectations and career goals with eighth-grade boys and girls determined minimal differences based on gender at the middle school level. This is an important implication for the counseling process. Counselors may well be able to dissuade young women from changing their aspirations because as they get older their goals may no longer be socially or gender appropriate as determined by environmental press or other factors.

## *Career Development Strategies: Race*

A number of effective career development strategies have been suggested for use with minority students. Zunker's ***Career Counseling: Applied Concepts of Life Planning*** (1994) provides a wealth of information for use with majority and minority groups. His research provided the foundation for these recommendations. Zunker suggested a variety of developmental strategies that may be used with various racial and ethnic groups. As this discussion is reviewed, it is important to remember that, in all likelihood, many of these strategies would be useful for *anyone* in the career counseling process!

Although Zunker (1994) reported that as a group Asian Americans have low unemployment rates, their communications skills may be the troublesome aspect of the career counseling process. Thus, he suggests these important elements in career counseling with Asian Americans:

- Learning self-assertion skills
- Learning to understand organization systems and bureaucracies
- Improving communication skills
- Improving interpersonal skills
- Learning to understand work environments (p. 385)

These suggestions reflect the significant differences between Eastern and Western cultures, especially in the business community. An awareness and understanding of these differences is critical to counselors who work with Asian Americans clients.

Leong and Gim-Chung (1995) directly addressed career counseling with Asian Americans. Just as with any other racial or ethnic group label, "Asian American" implies a likeness that simply does not exist. To assume that all members of any group are alike lays a foundation for a relationship based on a false assumption—such is the warning to the wise career counselor. There are a variety of issues such as degree of acculturation, gender, socioeconomic status, culturally based factors, and the role of the family that influence the career choice and development process of Asian Americans. These authors reported that, given an Asian American's predilection to take a passive role in the counseling process, the search for structure and direction with a counselor who takes almost a laissez-faire approach will cause no small amount of distress and frustration.

The value and effectiveness of the counselor will increase by learning how his or her client conceptualizes problems, develops solutions, and achieves goals. Addressing these issues at the beginning of the process will also let the client know the counselor is attuned to cultural and racial differences that are critical in the career guidance process.

Leong and Hayes (1990) established evidence of occupational segregation and thus stereotyping of Asian Americans and realized several implications for career counselors who work with this population. If these practices are widespread, they may easily result in barriers, both internal and external, to the career aspirations of Asian Americans. These barriers may emerge in a variety of settings, not the least of which may be in the career counseling

setting. This possibility requires that counselors work to ensure that their *clients'* goals are clearly established, especially when, in the counselor's mind, they are incongruent with previous clients and previous experiences.

African Americans have long been the target of subtle and not-so-subtle educational and employment discrimination, perhaps resulting in a negative self-esteem model. The strategies Zunker (1994) suggested for use with African American clients focus more on developing the self:

- Developing self-concept
- Learning to be more internally directed
- Learning about job opportunities
- Clarifying motivational aspirations
- Learning to cope with the Caucasian society (p. 387)

Central to these strategies is the necessity of knowing oneself, which requires an assessment of expectations for success as well as the fear of failure. Once a positive self-concept is developed and options are defined, the process of *choosing* a career may begin.

The Hispanic American ethnic group is comprised of primarily Mexicans, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans. The cultural mores of each of these subgroups differ, making broad generalizations regarding counseling issues somewhat difficult. The primary patriarchal family structure may provide additional challenges in career counseling, especially for women. Nonetheless, Zunker (1994) suggested the following:

- Learning goal-setting and problem-solving skills
- Developing working-parent skills
- Improving financial management of resources (p. 389)

All these require the individual to look beyond what is needed today or what their life circumstances are today to what their choices and circumstances may well become tomorrow.

Because of the limited research conducted with Native Americans regarding the career counseling process, it is somewhat difficult to make recommendations. In addition, their continuing physical isolation from mainstream cultures as well as extremely high drop-out rates further complicate the career development process. Zunker (1994) did, however, suggest the following as a means of helping Native Americans maintain their cultural ties while further enhancing their career opportunities:

- Using parents and relatives as counseling facilitators
- Using Native American role models
- Emphasizing individual potential in the context of future goals (p. 392)

## *Career Development Strategies: Class*

Meara, Davis, and Robinson (1997) advise when working with the poor that modified traditional assessment approaches be used. The counselor may also need to develop a "working alliance" with the client that extends over a period of time. Frequently, these clients may drop in and out of counseling situations due to a variety of issues, not the least of which may simply be the ability to get there. As a key aspect of successful career development strategies involves the determination of self, Markus and Nurius (as cited in Meara, Davis, and Robinson) "suggest interview strategies or exercises focusing on the self-schema conceptualization termed *possible selves*" (p. 119). This permits clients to think of themselves in career settings perhaps never before thought possible—a sort of "blue sky" career experience!

Based on their research with urban and rural high school seniors and career maturity, Anderson and Brown (1997) established a relationship between confidence in making career decisions and "amount of previous career planning activity" (p. 313). Two recommendations emerge from this finding. First is that one counseling intervention for these youth would involve an assessment of their own attitudes about the career planning process available to them. This would also mean that students would have to perceive this process as worthy of their attention. Second, this speaks to the need for the career awareness process to begin early in elementary school so that children have numerous opportunities to explore a variety of careers.

## *Guidance Issues: Beyond the Counselor*

As each person works through the career choice and development process, it is anticipated that a counselor will provide guidance throughout. Given even this discussion of the issues of gender, race, and class as they relate to career choice, it is evident that this can be and usually is a multistep, time-consuming process. How much of a counselor's time might a middle school or high school student have in any academic year? Unfortunately, not enough.

However, the individual with whom those students do spend significant amounts of time daily is the classroom teacher. Often it is the classroom teacher who may provide—or not provide depending on the student's gender, race, and class—information regarding skills, abilities, aspirations, choices, and opportunities. The extent to which issues of equity have been addressed in teacher education programs may have a direct effect on the extent to which classroom teachers provide equitable opportunities for educational growth and development of all students, regardless of gender, race, or class. The following provides relevant information and suggestions for those who work with students on a daily basis outside the guidance process.

**"Often it is the classroom teacher who may provide—or not provide depending on the student's gender, race, and class—information regarding skills, abilities, aspirations, choices, and opportunities."**

Lasonen and Burge's (1991) research on Finnish vocational teachers' gender-role attitudes has implications for the present discussion. These authors reported: "Historically, the gender biased division of labor has shaped stereotypes of female competencies as well as women's self-images. The personal characteristics and modes of action commonly attributed to women—unintelligent, emotional, and unable to handle issues outside everyday routine—are, in fact, characteristics of the tasks and occupations women are often assigned in the division of labor" (p. 2). And in both Finland and the United States women often choose or are directed into low-pay, low-status, female-intensive jobs; thus the role of the classroom teacher in debunking occupational stereotypes is an important one. Slightly more than 900 Finnish vocational teachers responded to 36 gender-role attitude items pertaining to gender roles in education. Not surprisingly, men supported women's traditional "housekeeping roles rather than their roles related to career development and leadership" (p. 4).

Lasonen and Burge's (1991) research supports the notion that "teachers' gender-role stereotypes have been found to have effects on classroom behavior. Teachers are the mediators of societal values and gender roles to students" (p. 4). The daily interaction with the classroom teacher may have greater effect on career choice than the occasional visit with the guidance counselor. These authors recommend examination of workplace and work force issues such as gender discrimination. Only by directly confronting the issue might one ever expect change to occur.

In 1991 the American Association of University Women reported that classroom gender bias still persists, calling it a "stalled agenda," and reporting that "most curricula still largely ignore the contributions of women—particularly minority women—and that educators have lower expectations for girls than for boys" (p. 1). In all

likelihood, the majority of teachers want to provide a gender-fair educational environment, but have never received or been exposed to appropriate theories and techniques. Three areas of reform recommended by Vandell and Dempsey (1991) are curriculum reform, classroom dynamics, and staff development. Teacher education curriculum reform should go hand-in-glove with current school reform efforts. This would provide a climate for knowledge acquisition and experimentation in instructional strategies where prospective teachers can learn to deal with their biases and develop techniques to create gender-fair educational environments. The classroom dynamics in colleges of education should model the teaching behaviors to which future teachers aspire. Staff development provides continuing opportunities for established educators who have not been privy to "issues of gender-fair and multicultural education during their pre-service training" (p. 4). These workshops should include at a minimum "gender socialization and development as well as the contributions and history of women and minorities in education history and thought" (p. 4).

Rose and Dunne (1989) address political conservatives who may be less inclined to support equity programs "by arguing that attention to the education of minorities and women is not only good social policy, but good business as well, since the need for skilled workers and professionals is widely recognized by political actors who might not respond to an equity argument alone" (p. 29). They, too, point to the continuing sex stereotyping in schools and the seeming difficulty with which teachers and administrators embrace change. Rose and Dunne provided six recommendations appropriate for inclusion in any teacher preparation program:

1. Teacher education programs should provide prospective teachers the opportunity to study classroom dynamics, their own and others, in order to eliminate bias in classroom communication.
2. Students of teaching should have guided exposure to text materials containing sex stereotypes or using sexist language so that they become aware of the messages conveyed by the school environment and can supplement present textbooks or choose new ones more judiciously.
3. Methods courses should incorporate research findings on the biasing effects of teaching methods and how to counteract those effects.
4. Courses on curriculum should include resources that will help preservice teachers promote equal participation and achievement in their teaching fields.

5. Teacher educators should be familiar with the ***Handbook for Achieving Sex Equity through Education*** (Klein, 1985).
6. Teacher educators must model what they teach (Rose and Dunne, pp. 30-31).

Although the focus of these recommendations is on gender/sex equity, this same attitudinal framework is also appropriate for addressing equity with regard to race and class.

In addition, school reform initiatives such as the School to Work Opportunities Act (1994) have the goal of helping students make the transition successfully between school and careers and beyond. Comprehensive guidance programs as well as experience in the world of work are key elements of the school-to-work initiatives. McWhirter, Rasheed, and Crothers (1997) sought to determine the effects of a 9-week career education class on career decision-making self-efficacy on a group of high school sophomores who were enrolled in a required career education class. These authors determined that the career education class brought about significant increases in career decision-making self-efficacy and vocational skills self-efficacy. One might also anticipate a concomitant increase when such a class was combined with some kind of work-based education experience where students are able to try out those skills and abilities that they have acquired in the classroom.

Wacker (1995) also suggested that the federally funded tech prep and school-to-work educational reform initiatives provide a classic opportunity to bring stakeholders together to work collectively in the school-to-career effort for a child. She advised that the following four premises are central to wise career awareness, choice, and development as well as the transition from school to work:

Premise 1: Educators, parents, employers, and community members must help students focus on their future (p. 2). The success of this effort requires all concerned parties to work collectively as a group for the good of the "we" rather than the good of the "me."

Premise 2: A comprehensive guidance framework can help ensure that students make informed career decisions (p. 4). The key to success here is that this effort has the genuine support of the administration, faculty, and guidance counselors.

Premise 3: Career development must be curriculum based (p. 6). For some schools, faculty, and administrators this may be extremely difficult because of the unevenness of connection between school and the world of work.

Premise 4: Parents must be equal partners in students' career planning and development (p. 6). In explaining the advantages of the tech prep and/or school-to-work programs, it is critical that parents understand that participation in these programs will not limit their children's future opportunities and may even enhance them.

These premises are foundational to successful career development programs for all children. The responsibility of effective career development programs is not one that may simply be delegated to a particular group because of the moniker it has been assigned! It is a responsibility for all those whose goal it is to educate the *student* rather than just teach the *subject*.

Lastly, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act was signed into law in 1996. Moving welfare recipients to the work force is the goal of this act and a goal with which few would argue. However, to assume that this transition will be successful without appropriate intervention and implementation sensitivity is a false assumption. Many of the affected individuals may be long-time welfare recipients, without requisite job search skills to say nothing of the required skill of balancing work and family life. Edwards, Rachal, and Dixon (1997) suggest that different guidance strategies will be needed when helping clients move from welfare to work. With this population, especially, career development counselors must be ever mindful of the effects of gender, race, and class on career choice and development.

## *Summary*

Leong (1993) suggested two polar perspectives with regard to the counseling and guidance process with racial and ethnic minorities. One is that it should not be any different than with a majority client. The other is that it should be very different from that with a majority client. He also suggested that the most appropriate approach is somewhere in between the two. The previous discussion provides clear evidence of the need for those involved in the guidance process to recognize individual differences and deal with them

appropriately—somewhere between the two perspectives posed by Leong.

Likewise, Sue and Sue's (1977) cross-cultural counseling process is as an excellent summary of culturally appropriate and culturally inappropriate counseling processes. The two dimensions of Process and Goals underlie Sue and Sue's model. The interaction of these two dimensions with an appropriateness dimension yields this typology: (1) appropriate goals, appropriate process; (2) inappropriate goals, inappropriate process; (3) appropriate goals, inappropriate process; and (4) inappropriate goals, appropriate process. The extent to which the career guidance process is effective is in large part determined by the effectiveness of the career counselor. When a counselor is able to work with a client to establish appropriate goals via an appropriate process *for the client*, effective career guidance will result.

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**Students of all ages spend much more of their time with the classroom teacher than the guidance counselor. And often, it is the teacher who is in a key position to provide ongoing career guidance.**

"

As mentioned earlier, however, students of all ages spend much more of their time with the classroom teacher than the guidance counselor. And often, it is the teacher who is in a key position to provide ongoing career guidance. Teachers, too, must be cognizant of the need to be aware of and sensitive to individual student differences and, thus, individual needs. This awareness should be developed and nurtured in teacher preparation and inservice programs. It may also come with experience and simply working with students on both an individual and a daily basis. Success requires moving from an ethnocentric perspective to a more global, inclusive perspective. This requires developing an awareness and acceptance of choices that are best for the *student* and his or her needs, goals, and aspirations. This awareness may also require providing students with a variety of experiences in the out of the classroom that may enhance their career awareness and, thus, their ability to make a wise career choice.

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